DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 040 427 CG 005 431

AUTHOR Lynch, Ann Q.
TITLE The Effects of Basic Encounter and Task Training Group Experiences on Undergraduate Advisors to Freshmen Women.
INSTITUTION Florida Univ., Gainesville.
PUB DATE [70]
NOTE 9p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.55
DESCRIPTORS College Freshmen, *Guidance Services, *Self Actualization, Social Integration, *Student Personnel Services, Student Personnel Work, *Student Personnel Workers, *T Groups

ABSTRACT

The research described was designed to compare the effects of a basic encounter group experience upon undergraduate advisors to freshmen women with a traditional task training group experience and with no group experience. The subjects were randomly placed into the following groups: (1) the basic encounter group in which members were encouraged to become aware of their feelings and to explore relating to others; (2) the task training group where members were given information relative to being an effective advisor; and (3) the control group where members were given no group experiences. Instruments administered pre- and post-treatment were: (1) Personal Orientation Survey; (2) Acceptance of Self and Others Attitude Scale; (3) Least Preferred Co-Worker Scale; and (4) a description of a human relations problem. Results indicated that brief encounter group experiences do not change the dimension of self-actualization, but that the overall effectiveness of advisors was enhanced by some kind of group experience. Implications for further research are presented. (TL)

ED 040427

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE EFFECTS OF BASIC ENCOUNTER AND TASK TRAINING GROUP EXPERIENCES ON UNDERGRADUATE ADVISORS TO FRESHMAN WOMEN

Ann Q. Lynch, Ed.D., University of Florida

Man seeks affirmation of self through other men. As he attempts to communicate, he is often thwarted by the very forces which empower him with greater ability to relate, such as intellectualization, semantics, and game playing (Berne, 1964). Genuine dialogue of Buber's (1965) I - Thou nature in which each seeks to have the other know who he is, for himself, is a rarity. Coming into an authentic relation with another human being requires trust and involves risk. It therefore seems to be the province of those who are skilled in human relations to provide an atmosphere in which risks can be taken and the ability to trust can be strengthened.

The research has been mounting (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967; Bergin and Solomon, 1963; Aspy, 1966; Lister, 1968) that the traditionally educated helping person is often unable to provide the conditions of empathy, regard and genuineness essential for human healing and development. A whole new curriculum in human relations needs to be devised (Shoben, 1962). Education can capitalize upon the unique contributions of the encounter group (Burton, 1969).

Every year new students embark upon college careers with uncertainty, wrestling with developmental tasks which include independence, identity formation and interpersonal relations as well as academics. Rossi (1964) found evidence to indicate that the greatest major change in the values of students occurred during the initial six to eight weeks of their first college year. Orientation programs that are well staffed and planned can enhance the students' transition to college life (Barger & Hall, 1968). Riker (1965) suggested that orientation programs need to be emphasized in housing units as the students' first point of contact with the institution.

CG 005 431

Further, if the staff can be educated in human relations, the opportunity for the new student to feel he belongs is greatly enhanced.

THE PROBLEM

At the University of Florida, returning women undergraduates volunteer to assist new freshman women in becoming oriented to college life and residence hall living. In the past, little formal training had been provided. The purpose of this research was to compare the effects of a basic encounter group experience upon the undergraduate advisors to freshman women with a traditional task training group experience and with no group experience. Outcome variables are measures of self-actualization, acceptance of self and others, ratings of the perceptual organization of the advisors, and ratings of the advisor by her advisees. The questions the original study asked were:

(1) Do members of any of the groups, Basic Encounter(E), Task Training(T), or Control(C), gain more in self-actualization than members of the other groups as a result of the treatment?

(2) Do group members who are functioning initially at a higher level gain more as a result of the treatment than members who are functioning at lower levels?

In the follow-up study, the question asked was:

(3) Do freshman advisees rate their advisors higher according to the group experience of the advisor?

THE PROCEDURE

Sample

The subjects of this study were freshman women at the University of Florida who volunteered to spend approximately five hours in training and two hours in testing during their third quarter and who volunteered to be advisors to freshman women during the following fall quarter. The final

sample was composed of 55 third quarter freshman females living in two residence halls.

Design

The original 78 subjects were assigned on a random basis; however, when some did not complete the assigned treatments, a randomly assigned sample could no longer be assumed. The two experimental groups were run simultaneously within halls by equivalently educated residence hall counselors. The length of time of the group sessions was five hours within the same time and halls, and in equivalent settings.

Experimental Methods

E - The Basic Encounter group members were encouraged to become aware of their own feelings and to explore relating to others. The counselor facilitated self-exploration and encouraged feedback using several exercises suggested by Schutz (1967) and Satir (1964). According to Rogers' (1967) conceptualization of the process stages of encounter groups, these groups seemed to proceed through the following stages in the five hours: (a) milling around, (b) resistance to personal expression and exploration, (c) description of past feelings, (d) expression and exploration of personally meaningful material, (e) expression of immediate interpersonal feelings in the group. Some members seemed to proceed further and a few did not participate actively enough to try to assess the stage of their process. None of the members had had prior group experience, but many showed appreciation of the opportunity to express themselves and "be with" the others.

T - Task Training group members were given information relative to being an effective advisor. Maps, schedules and brochures of campus agencies were distributed. Policies, regarding registration, petitioning and students' activities were presented. A video tape was shown of a role playing interaction involving an advisor. Throughout the five hours, the "role" of the advisor was emphasized by the trainer.

C - The Control group members were given no group experience between pre- and post- testing.

Instruments

The following instruments were administered pre- and post- treatment to the 55 advisors in the original study.

(1) Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), developed by Shostrom(1964, 1966), purports to measure the values believed to be important in the development of self-actualization. The POI attempts to assess a person's position on a continua of two major scales of Time Competence and Inner Direction as well as ten secondary scales.

(2) Acceptance of Self and Others Attitude Scale was developed by Berger (1952) using the Likert procedure. The items are rated on a five-point rating scale constructed around elements of a definition of acceptance by Sheerer (1949). The instrument yields two scales: Acceptance of Self and Acceptance of Others.

(3) Least Preferred Co-Worker Scale (LPC), developed by Fiedler (1967), is an Osgood-type semantic differential, containing bipolar adjective items on which the individual is instructed to rate the person with whom he works least well. The scale seems to differentiate between low LPC persons who gain self-esteem through performance of the task and high LPC persons who are concerned with gaining self-esteem through recognition by others.

(4) Description of a Human Relations Problem: Each subject was asked to write a description of a human relations problem in which she had been involved. She was to tell what happened, what she did about it, how she felt about it at the time and how she presently felt about it. Three judges trained on Combs (1961) dimensions of perceptual organization inferentially rated the descriptions using a five point scale on the following continua:

(A) General Frame of Reference:

Internal ---------- External

(B) Sees People as:

Worthy ---------- Unworthy

(C) Views Self as:

Identified with people -------- Apart from people

(D) Approach to problems is:

Process Oriented ---------- Ends Oriented

(E) Methods of helping:

Open Communication ---------- Closed Communication

Inter-rater agreement averaged 80%. The process of clinical inference was used here because the other instruments were essentially self-report. The 110 protocols were coded and randomly mixed pre- and post- treatment and across halls and groups. Judges rated one dimension at a time.

RESULTS

On the pre-post testing data in the original study, a three factor analysis of variance for repeated measures was used for each variable, the three factors being levels, groups and scores. The main effects have little meaning to this study. By definition levels were different, and the differences between groups using both pre- and post- treatment scores were non-significant. The post-treatment scores on many of the self-report instruments scales were significantly higher than pre-treatment scores for all the subjects taken together; however, the post-treatment score was significantly lower for the subjects as a whole on the perceptual organization dimensions. Only ten days elapsed between pre- and post- testing and may account for higher self-report scores involving memory and social desirability learning, whereas an examination of the Human Relations Problem

revealed many post-treatment protocols as being short and not dealing with as intense of meaningful human relations problems as the pre-treatment protocols. The first and second order interactions did not reveal any significant differences. The results of the original study did not give support to either of the questions that the members of any of the groups gained more in self-actualization than members of the other groups as a result of the treatment, or that those group members who were functioning initially at higher levels gained more in self-actualization as a result of the treatments than those functioning at lower levels.

In the follow-up study in the fall, freshman women advisees were asked to rate their sophombre advisors on dimensions of helpfulness which included indirect ratings of empathy, regard and genuineness adapted from Barrett-Lennard's Relationship Inventory (1962). These data were collected for the subjects in the original study who were advisors in the fall. This sample consisted of 41 females with 3 or 4 dropping out of each of the three groups. A simple analysis of variance was used to test the differences between groups. The results revealed that the encounter and task training groups received significantly higher (p .05) overall ratings than the no treatment control group. The data further showed that the encounter group had significantly higher ratings (p .05) than the task group on measures of empathy and genuineness. The measure of regard did not show any significant differences.

DISCUSSION

This study seems to indicate that brief (five hour) encounter group experiences can not be expected to make changes in dimensions of self-actualization. The follow-up data would seem to indicate that perception of overall effectiveness of advisors can be enhanced by some kind of group experience and that the encounter group experience seems to help advisors in becoming better able to communicate their empathy and genuineness than does the task training group experience.

Further implications for research would indicate that lengthening the time of the encounter group experience, increasing the potency of the experience by using other techniques, and making the experience more meaningful for the individual advisor might have some effect on the self-actualization of advisors. Another approach might be to assign and match subjects to groups on the basis of their pre-test scores. The study might be replicated with an increase in the number of the groups using more counselors and an increase in the size of the sample.

An important implication of this research is the need to increase the number and abilities of people to help. If our society can be strengthened by having more "hidden therapists" (Bergin, 1967), perhaps professional helpers could devote more time to actualization than to remediation.

The real test of this research seemed to come in the quality of relationships formed between the advisor and her advisees. Ratings as well as global measures of self-actualization can not begin to measure that quality that seems to say "This person has helped me to feel that I belong."

Researchers must find new ways to assess the impact of growth experiences upon the individual. Educators must seek new processes to help men discover themselves and their kinship with the rest of humanity.

REFERENCES

Aspy, D. The relationship between teacher finctioning on facilitative dimensions and student performance on intellective indices. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1966.

Barger, B. & Hall, E. E. Students in transition, Unpublished Manuscript, University of Florida, 1968.

Barrett-Lennard, G. T. Dimensions of therapist response as causal factors in therapeutic change. Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 1962, 73, Whole No. 562.

Berger, E. M. The relation between expressed acceptance of self and expressed acceptance of others. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1952, 47, 778-782.

Bergin, A. E. An empirical analysis of therapeutic issues. In D. S. Arbuckle (Ed.) Counseling and Psychotherapy: An Overview. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967, Pp. 175-212.

Bergin, A. E. & Solomon, S. Personality and performance correlates of empathic understanding in psychotherapy. American Psychologist, 1963, 18, 393.

Berne, E. Games People Play: Psychology of Human Relations. New York: Grove Press, 1964

Buber, M. I and Thou. New York: Scribners, 1958.

Burton, A. Encounter: The Theory and Practice of Encounter Groups. New York: Jossey-Bass, 1969.

Carkhuff, R. R. & Berenson, B. G. Beyond Counseling & Therapy. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967.

Combs, A. W. A perceptual view of the nature of "helpers." In Personality Theory and Counseling Practices. Gainesville, Florida, Materials Diffusion Project, University of Florida, 1961.

Fiedler, F. E. A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Lister, J. L. School Counseling: for better or for worse. Unpublished manuscript, University of Florida, 1968.

Riker, H. C. College Housing as Learning Centers. Washington, D.C.: American Personnel & Guidance Assoc., 1965.

Rogers, C. R. The process of the basic encounter group. In J.F.T. Bugental (Ed.) Challenges of Humanistic Psychology. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967, Pp. 261-276.

Rossi, P. H. Working Paper. Research Conference on Social Sciences Methods and Student Residences: University of Michigan, 1964 (Mimeograph)

REFERENCES (contd.)

Satir, V. Conjoint Family Therapy. Palo Alto: Science & Behavior Books 1964.

Schutz, W. C. Joy: Expanding Human Awareness. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Sheerer, E. An analysis of the relationship between acceptance of and respect for the self and acceptance of and respect for other in ten counseling cases. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1949, 13, 167-175.

Shoben, E. J. Guidance: Remedial function or social reconstruction. Harvard Educational Review. 1962, 32, 430-443.

Shostrom, E. L. A test for the measurement of self-actualization. Educational & Psychological Measurement. 1964, 20, 207-218

Shostrom, E. L. Manual, personal orientation inventory. San Diego: Educational & Industrial Testing Service, 1966